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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

**IDA's Outreach to
Asia-Pacific Research Institutions**

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PREFACE

This study is the result of an ongoing effort to achieve two goals. The first goal is to build a network between the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) and Asian research organizations to exchange information and collaborate in research. The second goal is to generate support for IDA projects that have an Asian component. Most of the information on which this study is based has been acquired over many years of observation and contact with Asian individuals and organizations. The Strategy, Forces and Resources Division (SF&RD) is sponsoring this work as a Central Research Project.

The author is indebted to many people in the three East Asian countries surveyed here. Although I do not have the space to acknowledge each one individually, I extend my sincere gratitude for their assistance in granting interviews and providing information. I would also like to thank the members of the Central Research Program Committee for their confidence that this project will benefit IDA and its research staff members. Finally, I would like to thank three persons at IDA who have provided their personal support for IDA's Asia outreach program: Mr. Michael Leonard, Director of SF&RD; Dr. Robert Roberts, Vice President for Research; and Ambassador Chas. W. Freeman, Trustee and a prominent China expert. I hope the information and observations communicated in this paper will assist IDA research staff in connecting with the dynamic research community in East Asia.

CONTENTS

Preface.....	iii
Contents	v
Summary	S-1
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Previous IDA Projects Related to Asia-Outreach.....	2
B. Objectives and Methodology.....	3
C. Organization	4
II. ASIA'S LEADING RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS IN STRATEGY, POLITICS, AND ECONOMY.....	4
A. China	4
B. Japan.....	8
C. South Korea.....	10
III.THE CHANGING NATURE OF RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS IN ASIA	13
A. The Asian Definition of “Think Tank”: Collective Brain Farm, Not Creative Brain Farm	13
B. Efforts to Change the Nature of Think Tanks	14
C. The Current Asian Financial Crisis and Its Impact on Think Tanks	15
D. Concluding Remarks: Future Collaboration between IDA and Asian Think Tanks	16

SUMMARY

The primary objective of this project is to identify and contact East Asian research organizations as a first step in developing a basis for exchanges of information and ideas that would be useful to IDA. Several tasks are necessary to accomplish this goal:

- Identify current IDA projects that have an Asian component.
- Identify Asian research organizations that could potentially provide useful information for these projects.
- Contact those institutions to determine their value as a source of information and ideas.
- Open channels of communication, such as visitor exchange, with these organizations—a task that goes beyond the scope of the present project.

Asian think tanks place more restrictions on their researchers than do their American counterparts. One reason for this lack of independence is that most Asian think tanks are funded in whole or in part by a government that provides relatively strong guidance. Another reason is that, by their Confucian-style rank-by-age hierarchy, these institutions promote research staff based on seniority rather than productivity.

Korean and Japanese think tanks have begun to engage in more independent research in response to the changing post-Cold War environment, as policy makers have begun to ask for better, more imaginative products from their think tanks. Chinese think tanks have yet to initiate serious structural changes, although they are having trouble keeping their brightest young talents from defecting to the offices of multinational corporations.

Unlike the RAND Corporation or the Center for Naval Analyses, IDA lacks the critical mass of manpower to do extensive political and economic work on Asia. However, various methods are available whereby a valuable Asian component can be added to IDA's traditional work at relatively little cost.

IDA'S OUTREACH TO ASIA-PACIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

The importance of East Asia is increasing for the United States, as reflected in the prediction that the 21st century will be the Pacific Century. The eruption of the Asian financial crisis, starting with Thailand in the summer of 1997, has put a halt to one of the most dynamic economic developments of the 20th century. Some analysts have prematurely consigned the Asian economic growth theory to the ash can of history and touted the victory of the more open American economic system. Surely in the near term the Asian economies will suffer slow or even negative growth. However, the long-term prognosis is far from gloomy, considering several critical factors:

- The manufacturing strengths of these Asian economies have remained strong during the economic crisis.
- Both political and economic reforms seem to be in the works, although their depth varies widely among countries.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other global economic institutions are eager to assist these economies in recovering from the crisis, both in their own interests and in the interests of preventing the crisis from spreading to economies outside the region
- The social and cultural resources of these economies—e.g., educated workers and a goal-oriented value system—will assist economic recovery.

In the near term U.S. national security concerns in the region include maintaining constructive military and economic relations with Japan and the Republic of Korea, developing a stable relationship with China, and containing or engaging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The military power of China, Japan, and the two Koreas is world class. Apart from strictly military factors, the region is growing in importance as a production base and consumer market, and is becoming an important source of original and applied technologies. In both military and economic terms, developments in East Asia are important for U.S. security. Consequently, in order to accomplish its role as a source of analysis for the Pentagon, IDA needs greater exposure to Asia.

A. Previous IDA Projects Related to Asia-Outreach

Two IDA-funded research projects are especially relevant to Asia outreach. In FY96 IDA funded a project entitled *Engaging East Asia's Changing Defense Elites* (IDA Document D-1924). This project examined changing national security establishments in Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore. The project was guided by two questions: (1) What is the impact of increasingly disconnected defense establishments and the emergence of new strategic centers of thinking in post-Cold War East Asia on U.S. security policy in the region? and (2) What are the opportunities for IDA to develop track-two dialogue with friends and allies in the region in support of DoD's regional security strategy?

This CRP focused on U.S. bilateral relations with Japan, Korea, and Singapore and provided a list of defense experts and institutions in each of these countries with influence in the respective domestic national security policy communities. This project was a pioneer CRP in terms of Asia outreach efforts by IDA research staff working for OSD. In FY 1997, I conducted a CRP on China and Korea entitled *China's Strategic Relations with the Two Koreas* (IDA Document D-2085), which focused on one crucial but largely neglected aspect of international relations in East Asia; namely, the changing strategic relations between China and the two Koreas. The project examined the dramatic changes occurring since the normalization of diplomacy between China and South Korea in 1992. The project, including a field trip to China in the fall of 1997, opened the way for future research co-sponsored by IDA and Chinese research institutions. Possible OSD-relevant research topics include missile technology and market economics in China.

The current outreach project is an extension of these two previous efforts, and this project has profitably utilized the networks and experiences developed in those projects as a starting point. One immediate benefit of these projects has been that the Asian research organizations contacted in this research have become aware of the existence and work of IDA.

B. Objectives and Methodology

The primary objective of the current project is to identify and contact East Asian research organizations as a first step in developing a basis for exchanges of information and ideas that would be useful to IDA. Several tasks are necessary to accomplish this goal:

- Identify current IDA projects that have an Asian component.
- Identify Asian research organizations that could potentially provide useful information for these projects in terms of background and substance.
- Contact those institutions to determine their value as a source of information and ideas.
- Open channels of communication, such as visitor exchange, with these organizations—a task that goes beyond the scope of the present project and will depend on the interests of IDA researchers.

Ironically, the most difficult aspect of this project has been to interest IDA researchers in forming Asian links for their research. Research staff members have been very cordial but not always open in terms of sharing their research project ideas with me. Some researchers were eager to tell me what they were doing and interested to hear what I could offer them in terms of Asian connections; others were suspicious of my motives. Consequently, I have not pursued the fourth task of opening channels for fellow researchers who, unfortunately in my opinion, see no necessity in consulting area specialists to verify the area applications of their functional projects.

I have met with considerable success in renewing old connections and establishing new ones in Asia, particularly among research institutions in China that deal with strategic, military, and technological analyses. During my 7 years at RAND I built a strong network with various Chinese think tanks and government institutions, even though my primary research areas were Japan and Korea. But I lost contact with most of these institutions after leaving RAND in the spring of 1995. The dynamic Shanghai area is especially rich in new research institutions. Due to limited funding I was unable to make a field trip to China for this year's research. However, I made a point to contact Asian scholars who came to the United States as visiting fellows or who attended seminars and workshops offered by other think tanks.

C. Organization

Chapter II of this study surveys key research institutions in China, Japan, and Korea, listing them by name and providing their research focus. Chapter III outlines changes in the nature of Asian research institutions' potential areas of development for research collaboration with IDA. Current joint projects and collaboration between other U.S. and Asian research institutions are added to illustrate the possibilities for such joint research. Chapter IV offers my thoughts on a future direction for IDA research with an Asian component.

II. ASIA'S LEADING RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS IN STRATEGY, POLITICS AND ECONOMY

A. China

Two types of research institutions exist in China. First, there are institutions financed and operated by the Chinese government—usually under the State Council—both in Beijing and in other cities. The most famous government institution is the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in Beijing, with other branches in each provincial capital. The Beijing and Shanghai branches are the strongest. The second type of research institution is funded at least in part by private sources. Given the nature of the Chinese government, most of the better known non-government institutions receive some government funding, and their research staff maintain close relations with the central or regional government to secure funding and gain political influence.

1. Beijing

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)

CASS installations in Beijing and Shanghai have long and respectable traditions and renown among the research community. CASS research staff hold professorial titles, which confer great prestige on them in a nation where, by virtue of Confucian values, education has traditionally commanded great respect. Even in the midst of economic and cultural devastation during the Great Proletarian Revolution, CASS researchers sustained pride and prestige without losing their fundamental fame as leading thinkers and analysts for the government. CASS in Beijing is situated on spacious grounds, though its gracious turn-of-the century colonial-style buildings are badly in need of remodeling.

Institute of American Studies, Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies

These are the two most important institutes within CASS for American researchers. The director of the Institute of American Studies is Professor Wang Jisi, a soft-spoken intellectual who strikes you as a modest and likable gentleman with a warm personality. Under his leadership many Western scholars have built strong professional and personal relationships with his institute and its researchers, and this institute is the center in China of American studies. Institute researchers are interested in the entire spectrum of American studies, from new fashion designs to the latest White House gossip.

As its name indicates, the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies is the center of research on Asia, conducted by many bright researchers of the younger generations who fluently speak the languages of their area country specialties. For example, I met a young scholar who was born in Yanbian County of Northeastern China close to the North Korean border. Although he was born as a Korean minority, he did not speak Korean until he became interested in Korean politics. For his studies, he went to Japan in order to gain a balanced view of the two Koreas. Thus, his first foreign language was Japanese; only later did he learn Korean. Several ASEAN area scholars at the Institute spoke good Malay; others spoke Hindi. This language ability is refreshing, if not remarkable, given China's communist history as a self-absorbed people living under a restrictive government. The director of the Institute, Dr. Zhang Yunling, is an astute specialist in the political economies of Japan, Korea and China. He recently held a visiting fellowship at Harvard.

Institute of Japanese Studies, APEC Policy Research Center

These two relatively new research centers illustrate the changing nature of research management at CASS. Dr. Zhang is also the director of these two centers, pending the appointment of younger researchers to fill the center directorships.

China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)

CIIS is a main think tank of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its president is Ambassador Yang Chengxu, perhaps one of the most influential people in Beijing outside the government. Ambassador Yang, now retired from government service, is widely recognized in the West as both a distinguished scholar and diplomat. He was selected by the Asia Foundation as one of the three "Distinguished Guest Speakers," the centerpiece of a new program to bring Asian elites to the U.S. research community and

lecture circuit. I first met Ambassador Yang at an Asia Foundation luncheon, and we have kept up a good relationship ever since. CIIS is located in a quiet residential area in Beijing close to the central government compound. The institute has an excellent research library of Asian sources. CIIS is a good research and influence connection given its quasi-independence from, yet close relationship with, the Chinese government.

China Institute of International Strategic Studies (CIISS)

CISS is the main academic arm of the General Staff Department (GSD) of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). It focuses on national security and defense-related analyses. Its staff consists largely of top analysts from the GSD's Second Department, which conducts military intelligence. Chen Xiaogong and Yang Chaoying are two research fellows at CISS who have wide contacts in the United States.

China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR)

CICIR, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of State Security, is the largest institute in China's national security research bureaucracy. The staff researcher best known to foreigners is Yan Xuetong, Deputy Director of the Center for China's Foreign Policy Studies. CICIR's specialists on North Korea are among the best in China. Although the Institute is under the jurisdiction of the State Security Ministry, its researchers are for the most part open-minded and eager to exchange views with foreign scholars.

Foundation for International and Strategic Studies (FISS)

FISS is a small military-related agency established relatively recently. Its functions are to advise various branches of the PLA and to expand military contacts with foreigners. I was interested to observe that FISS was the first Chinese think tank in my experience to install an overhead projector (in the fall of 1993) for its high-rank briefing sessions to impress PLA dignitaries. Although the lecture facility was rather congested and small, they knew the importance of modern technology to produce a first-class presentation. FISS plays a central role in military and strategic policy analysis.

China Reform Forum (CRF)

CRF is one of the newest of Beijing's research institutions, with a research staff that is characterized by aggressive entrepreneurship in terms of making contacts with American researchers. It seems that Forum's research focus is still evolving, but the

research staff whom I have met seem to employ Western logic and viewpoints to analyze the changing nature of regional and international affairs. CRF has vigorously pursued bilateral exchange programs with foreign think tanks, and it seems to have the budget to support visits by foreign researchers.

2. Shanghai

Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS)

For centuries, southern and northern China have engaged in sometimes innocent and other times fierce battles to prove their regional superiority. SASS staffers are not modest in boasting that theirs is the best academy in China. The Academy does indeed have some of the brainiest and most prominent intellectuals, working in a crumbling old building in the midst of remodeling, thus still preserving a sense of tradition and the flavor of the glorious pre-communist Shanghai. Among many in-house research centers, the most important one for Asian studies is the *Institute of Asian and Pacific Studies*. Among the research staff are many shining intellectual stars whose eloquence and sharp analysis distinguishes them from the rather dull and mediocre analysts one is more likely to find in government-related institutes throughout China. Liu Ming and Zhou Jianming are two of the more notable younger generation scholars.

Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS)

SIIS is Shanghai's counterpart of CISS, operated under the aegis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Institute conducts research on a variety of social science topics. Ding Xinghao, Vice Director of the Department of American Studies, is well connected with scholars outside China. He was a visiting senior fellow at the United States Institute of Peace from 1995–96. I have maintained a cordial and professional senior-junior relationship with him since 1993.

3. Liaoning and Jilin

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

The branches of the CASS located in these cities in northeastern China are important for two reasons. First, their North Korean experts, the best in China, maintain a close relationship with experts in North Korea and officials in the North Korean government. Second, both branches have economists who are knowledgeable about the

potential of the United Nations Development Program in the so-called golden delta, an area at the junction of China, Russia, and North Korea.

B. Japan

Unlike China, where Beijing and Shanghai compete with each other as the major centers of the intellectual community, Japan's intellectual community is centered mainly in the Tokyo area. Even professors and researchers who work in other cities in Japan often keep an apartment in Tokyo so they can commute to the capital and participate in Tokyo's intellectual and social life. Osaka is the center of Korean minority studies since the city has a large Korean minority population, but for national security and international relations work Tokyo is the place to be.

Japanese research institutions may be divided into two types. One type of institution serves as a think tank and outreach center for its sponsoring government ministry. The other type is a privately owned and managed organization often affiliated with rich foundations or large companies. In both types of institutions, the top management is mostly "*amakudari*" [descended from heaven]; that is, retired government officials who provide the institute with access to government policy makers.

Japan Institute for International Affairs (JIIA)

Former Ambassador to Washington Nobuo Matsunaga heads up this Ministry of Foreign Affairs think tank, which was established in the early 1980s as a forum for unofficial dialogue on contemporary political and economic issues with other governments and their think tanks. The Institute does not have many in-house researchers; rather, it serves as the center of track two dialogue on such sensitive issues as international cooperation on regional security and coping with North Korea. JIIA has recently enhanced its visiting scholar program in order to build a broader regional network on nonproliferation, North Korean studies, and arms control.

National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS)

NIDS, a research center under the Japanese Defense Agency, conducts research on international security and national defense issues. In the 1970s and 1980s, NIDS was a rather dull and unchallenging place conducting the type of research appreciated by conservative bureaucrats. Entering the 1990s, NIDS began to lure top-rank specialists from various universities and research centers in order to upgrade its research and to deal

with U.S. and Korean counterparts on a level intellectual playing field. Notable scholars like Professor Masashi Nishihara of the National Defense University of Japan became the director of the First Research Department (national defense and international relations studies) from 1994–1996. His successor is Professor Kondo Shigegatsu, a prominent strategic thinker from Osaka University. In recent months, NIDS has been deeply engaged in reorganizing its internal research departments. As a part of this reorganization effort, a NIDS delegation traveled to IDA in the spring of 1998 so that Robert Roberts, Vice President for Research, and I could brief them on IDA's Asian research.

Research Institute for Peace and Security (RIPS)

RIPS works for both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Japanese Defense Agency (JDA) on international security and peace issues. It is comparable to a combination of the National Defense University (NDU) Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) and the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) in Washington. RIPS is also like IISS in terms of publishing Japan's annual strategic assessment book. RIPS has visiting scholar programs for regional and international specialists, and its research relies heavily on contributions from outside specialists, since both its physical facility and budget are relatively small.

Institute for International Policy Studies (IIPS)

IIPS, perhaps the first genuine American-style think tank, was established by former prime minister Yasuhiro Nakasone in the late 1980s. The Institute's endowment was retirement gift money from generous political donors. When I visited IIPS in 1993 for a research project on U.S.-Japan security relations during the Gulf War, I was very impressed by its physical facilities and its management's commitment to become a first-class civilian think tank, unhindered by Japan's endemic bureaucratic red tape. Some experts whom I encountered there in 1993 are the best specialists in Japan on international relations, such as Hiroyuki Kishino, who later came to Columbia to earn a master's degree in international relations, and then became the director of MOFA's nuclear division. David Asher, a young American fellow at IIPS, became a rising star in the political economy of Japan. IIPS has lured numerous visiting and permanent researchers to its wide variety programs, from environmental issues to non-proliferation. Both Kishino and Asher were examples of imported talent: Kishino was on loan from MOFA and Asher was a U.S. Congressional fellow who spent 2 years at IIPS. A former three-star general and prominent military strategist (a rare species in non-military Japan),

Toshiyuki Shikata was on IIPS research staff until he accepted a professorship at Teikyo University. It seems that in recent years IIPS has gradually lost its role as a dynamic and creative research presence in Japan, causing some observers to question whether Japan promotes truly objective and open-minded research organizations unfettered by its conservative political culture.

Institute of Developing Economies (IDE)

IDE stands out in terms of its focus on developing economies, including socialist countries like China and North Korea. For example, IDE's Teruo Komaki, who speaks excellent Korean, is Japan's top expert on the North Korean economy. IDE's center for regional economies has Japan's most extensive economic resources on China and North Korea, which should invite the interest of IDA researchers. Japan does not have nearly as many independent policy think tanks as the United States does, but it does have numerous economic research centers—some independent and some with corporate affiliations. For example, the famous Federation of Economic Organizations [*Keidanren*] has its own think tanks to analyze domestic and international economic trends. The independent and famous *Nomura Research Institute* probably has a larger number of highly qualified economists than the economics department of a medium-size university.

C. South Korea

In Korea, like Japan, the research and intellectual community dwells mostly in the capital. Genuine civilian think tanks are rare, but thanks to South Korea's recent democratic reforms, new think tanks independent from the government have begun to appear. The major think tanks are related to government ministries, each of which has its own think tank to engage in research and outreach.

Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA)

As its name indicates, KIDA, established in the late 1970s, is modeled after IDA. It is a think tank for the Ministry of National Defense (MND). The president of KIDA typically is a retired army lieutenant general who plays a symbolic leadership role, the Korean version of the Japanese *amakudari*. In the past, KIDA management and research has been firmly under MND's thumb. All of KIDA's funding comes from the MND, which sets the research agenda and commissions specific projects. Objectivity in research has sometimes suffered. Research critical of MND has been unwelcome; meaningful communication between MND and its think tank, lacking.

New generation research staff members at KIDA have begun to challenge this relationship with the MND, consistent with the trend toward putting intellectual freedom as a top national priority, and as a way of instituting checks and balances on the government. Today KIDA remains an important think tank. Many of its senior members are famous and well-respected in their fields, publishing articles in professional journals. Many researchers are engaged in cooperative research with international scholars: my CRP for 1997–98 was done in collaboration with a KIDA staff member. In my recent visits to KIDA since I joined IDA, staff and top management expressed their strong desire to establish a bilateral exchange program with IDA. One of the nation's best arms control experts, Dr. Choi Kang joined President Kim Dae Jung's National Security Council on a loan from KIDA, and BG Cha Young Koo, Deputy Director of Policy Planning Staff at MND, has become a prominent military analyst after a successful research career at KIDA. Under the current government organizational reform, KIDA will reduce its manpower, but it seems to have gained greater freedom from the government in setting its research agenda and conducting its research.

Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS)

IFANS is a think tank of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). IFANS is headed by a chancellor, usually a senior diplomat who is awaiting his next major assignment. The current National Security Advisor to the President, Lim Dong Won, served as IFANS chancellor in the early 1990s; I met him during his IFANS tenure for my research on Korean arms control. IFANS conducts national security studies and regional studies on Russia, China, Eastern Europe, the Asia-Pacific, Western Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. International economic studies is another important area of research. IFANS has been aggressive in building joint research programs with regional counterparts, and the annual conference jointly sponsored by China's IISS, Japan's JIAA, and IFANS is highly regarded by diplomats and national security experts. The three centers alternate as conference sites. Drs. Lee So-Hang and Yu Suk-Ryul of IFANS are well-known scholars in arms control and North Korean studies both in Korea and overseas.

Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU)

KINU is a think tank of the Ministry of Unification and one of South Korea's most rapidly developing research organizations, thanks to its main research agenda: unification and North Korean research. It has many young scholars who have returned

from American universities with doctoral degrees and who are ambitious to apply newly learned methods to understanding unification and North Korea. KINU's annual publication program is extensive: more than 30 monographs, 5 to 6 conference proceedings, 5 annual journals, 6 biannual journals, 3 newsletters, and series of special policy memos. KINU actively promotes exchange programs, though it does not have a visiting fellow program because of the sensitive national security nature of its work on unification and North Korea studies. Its president is a retired government official, usually from MU. The opposite career course is also possible: when Kim Dae Jung became president, he tapped KINU's president to become deputy minister of MU.

Research Institute on National Security Affairs (RINSA)

RINSA is very similar to NDU's INSS in Washington: its administrative office is located inside the ROK's National Defense University and its members are university faculty and research associates. While it is not an independent think tank, it is an important debate forum for visiting lecturers on military and strategic issues. New faculty members who have recently been recruited by the university are playing leading roles in stimulating debate. One of these new members is Dr. Yong-Sup Han, who received his doctorate from RAND's graduate school for public policy. Notable scholars of national fame at NDU include Hwang Byong-Moo (Chinese military strategy) and Lee Sok-Ho (military strategy and war theory).

Korea Institute for Strategic Studies (KISS)

This private think tank was founded by a retired three-star army general, Hong Song-Tae, who is an able manager and fierce nationalist. KISS is one of the young think tanks that have mushroomed since the mid-1990s. General Hong turned out to be a shrewd businessman with a keen sense of marketing and management. His institute has supported many challenging projects on national security strategy and international relations of East Asia, with a slant toward independent and even nationalistic assessment of sensitive issues such as Korean weapons modernization and strategic independence from the United States. Under the current government administration, KISS was designated as a forum for active military leaders to debate comprehensive military reform. The Institute will play a critical role so long as General Hong holds to his nationalist approach to national security. I have been told by one of the Institute's research associates that General Hong does not like to invite foreigners to KISS debates in order that Korean participants can speak candidly.

Institute for Far Eastern Studies (IFES)

IFES is a university-affiliated institute and one of the oldest think tanks in Seoul. The greatest strength of this institute is its international scholar exchange programs, under which many prominent international specialists have been invited to study in Korea. The institute provides first-rate lodging and study facilities for its foreign guests. Not surprisingly, among think tanks IFES has established the best network of international scholars. The institute is also justly proud of its publications, which annually include at least a dozen good monographs, two bi-annual English journals, and numerous short policy papers for the research community and the public sector.

Korea Development Institute (KDI)

During the so-called Korean economic miracle period from the early 1970s to the end of 1980s, the government-funded KDI, as the most important economic think tank in Korea, was an almost magic name, communicating immense power and prestige. Many of Korea's top economists went to KDI instead of the big universities. KDI's president held the rank of deputy minister of the cabinet until 1997, when the government decided to lower his rank to assistant minister. Numerous foreign economists, including such notables as Ann Kruger and Lawrence Krause, came to KDI as visiting fellows to study Korean and comparative Asian economies. KDI's senior fellows spent their sabbatical at various U.S. institutions such as Washington's Institute for International Economics. KDI has recently established a Center for North Korean Studies, where a new generation of economists are beginning to analyze North Korea's economy and its weaknesses, with a view toward future reunification. Even though KDI is government-sponsored, the Center's publications are considered to be objective. KDI has lost some of its earlier glamour in recent years, even before the economic crisis of 1997, but it is still considered the ROK's leading economic think tank.

III. THE CHANGING NATURE OF RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS IN ASIA

A. The Asian Definition of "Think Tank": Collective Brain Farm, Not Creative Brain Farm

I remember being thrilled when I had my first encounter with visiting North Korean officials, in Los Angeles in 1989. When I presented my business card (as an international policy analyst at RAND), the two officials scrutinized my card for quite some time and then asked me what RAND was. Our host, the chancellor of UCLA, told

them that RAND was a famous American think tank. Then they asked me to define think tank. I gave some standard definition, and then one of the North Korean delegates exclaimed loudly, "Ah! I know what you mean: A "collective brain farm." To this day the expression sticks strongly in my memory.

"Collective brain farm," as defined by socialists, is actually not a bad description of Japanese and Korean think tanks, because the collective employs farmers who toil but do not challenge collective farm's leadership. What has been profoundly lacking in Asian research institutions is freedom to pursue ideology-free research and freedom to debate issues. Most Asian researchers work like mercenaries to generate research providing credibility or respectability for their sponsor's ideas. The reasons for this lack of independent thought are obvious: (1) The think tanks are often funded in whole or in part by a relatively autocratic government. (2) In their rank-by-age research hierarchy, derived from Confucian tradition, these institutions promote based on seniority as long as one does not disturb the system's equilibrium. (3) Culture frowns on drawing attention to oneself, for example, by expressing strong opinions in public.

B. EFFORTS TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF THINK TANKS

Korean and Japanese think tanks have begun to face the ontological question, "What do we do in the future?" This question arises primarily because the end of the Cold War and rapidly changing international relations among superpowers and their allies are forcing a rethinking of traditional global politics and the role of the middle powers in that system. The comfortable paradigm of analysis has become less applicable, as even unimaginative consumers of research can see. Governmental policy makers have begun to ask for better, more imaginative products from their think tanks. This demand has forced think tanks to reorganize and to question their research culture.

For example, in the mid-1990s, KIDA began to reorganize its staff structure and research efforts in order to provide more independence to researchers, although this reform still has a way to go. In my view, as an observer of KIDA for a number of years, its recent research seems to be improved, especially owing to the more active participation of younger colleagues, who have become more assertive and straightforward in pursuing their research agenda. Some of these young Turks have gone so far as to question the appropriateness of having a retired army general as KIDA's director. But if a retired general must take the position, they want one who has credentials as an intellectual, rather than a field commander.

To take an example from Japan, NIDS is currently going through the same reform process as KIDA, with the goal of gaining some independence from JDA staff. NIDS began a serious reevaluation of its structure and research orientation seriously in the fall of 1997. As a part of this endeavor, NIDS sent out top management and bright researchers to other countries to observe the operations of comparable institutions. IDA entertained a delegation led by Dr. Yuichiro Nagao in April 1998. Dr. Nagao wanted to learn about IDA's organization, publication procedure, client-patron relationship management, and quality control. Around the same time, NIDS invited back one of its former star researchers, Dr. Kondo Shigekatsu, who had left NIDS in 1995 owing to his frustration with management interference with his research.

So far as I am aware, Chinese think tanks in Beijing and Shanghai have yet to initiate serious structural changes. Nevertheless, Chinese think tanks are experiencing an interesting evolution due to economic pressures. Beijing's largest think tank, CICIR, for example, has lost many economists and younger researchers in other fields who had returned to China with advanced degrees from the United States, United Kingdom, and Japan. The principal reason for this loss was supply and demand. As more multinational corporations move into China, they need English- or Japanese- speaking specialists trained in Western thinking who can join work as their Chinese representatives. Younger generation Chinese professionals are increasingly bypassing government-affiliated positions in favor of working for these foreign firms, which offer more incentives for productivity. Put simply, they are forsaking Party position for money.

C. THE CURRENT ASIAN FINANCIAL CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON THINK TANKS

The financial crisis in Korea has been more acute than in Japan or China. Think tanks have experienced budget reductions of 10 to 20 percent, most often hitting research and travel budgets. The heads of many government-affiliated think tanks who formerly held the rank of vice minister in terms of protocol and salary have in many cases been demoted to the rank of assistant minister, with concomitant salary cuts. Although research staff manpower has not yet been cut, a more rigorous performance review and merit reward system is being installed in some institutions. In my opinion, based on interviews with several researchers at different institutions, some of these researchers, especially the younger ones, are excited by the changes, expecting that their youthful energy and initiative will finally be rewarded. Some of them naturally fear the loss of research

support, especially for field trips, but they are generally enthusiastic about this “weeding out” of the research field.

The Korean government has established an ad hoc review commission to reevaluate government-sponsored and government-affiliated think tanks in order to streamline the research operation and eliminate redundant organizations. Research organizations are being scrutinized for improper use of budgets. Several new policies have been recommended:

- Instituting outside accounting by professional CPAs
- Merging redundant institutions (for example, KIDA will absorb several small military-service related think tanks)
- Promoting a more transparent hiring and promotion system
- Conducting budget inspections before and after the fiscal year
- Reviewing the performance of managers as well as researchers (in the past, top management was immune from review).

To my knowledge, this level of rigorous review is not yet being instituted in Japan, and of course China has an even longer way to go. For Korean think tanks, the reform promises an improvement in research products and a better use of its research talent. Ironically, Korea, compared with Japan, was the later starter, both in economy and democratization, but today Korea seems to have leaped ahead of Japan in managerial reforms. From the U.S. perspective, the result of these reforms will be a great improvement in quality of U.S.-Korea research cooperation.

D. CONCLUDING REMARKS: FUTURE COLLABORATION BETWEEN IDA AND ASIAN THINK TANKS

IDA’s Asian studies program is in its infancy and is limited to SF&RD. Currently, the only regional Asian studies project is my project for OSD/ISA, although several CRPs and projects in other divisions are involved in Asia-related research with a functional emphasis. Unlike RAND or CNA, IDA lacks the critical mass of manpower to do more comprehensive political and economic work on Asia. However, this limitation does not necessarily render IDA incapable of pursuing collaborative work with Asian counterparts.

- IDA can improve collaboration between its Asian area specialists and its functional experts on relevant projects.
- With a limited budget, IDA can host workshops and lecture series to which Asian specialists are invited, thereby generating publicity for IDA’s projects.

- IDA's core Asian specialists are already well-known and well-networked in their fields throughout the United States and East Asia.
- IDA has not utilized its potential to engage in Asian research projects and fully apply its regional expertise to functional projects.
- IDA can build an Asian program in cooperation with other research centers (especially in the area) by jointly sponsoring events and small research projects.

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13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) This project identifies and describes research organizations in China, Japan, and South Korea which IDA researchers could contact to further their own research. Asian think tanks have traditionally produced less independent and creative research than their American counterparts, reflecting the fact that most Asian think tanks are government-run and a strong Confucian tradition limits the contributions of younger researchers. But especially in Japan and Korea, think tanks have begun to engage in more independent research in the 1990s. The products of this research should be made available to IDA researchers engaged in projects with an Asian component. Although IDA does not have the manpower to establish an Asian research center that could conduct its own research, information exchange and research collaboration could be promoted by utilizing the Asian networks of IDA's core Asian specialists, by hosting workshops and lecture series to which Asian researchers are invited, and by jointly sponsoring conferences and small research projects with Asian research centers.			
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